

# From Sea to Shining Sea (Grant) - Forty Years of Research through the National Sea Grant College Act



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*One thing we cannot escape — forever afterward, throughout all our life, the memory of the magic of water and its life, of the home which was once our own — this will never leave us.*

William Beebe, American naturalist and author

Last year marked the fortieth anniversary of the law which created the Sea Grant program, the National Sea Grant College and Program Act of 1966 (“Act”).<sup>1</sup> The Act’s main purpose was to

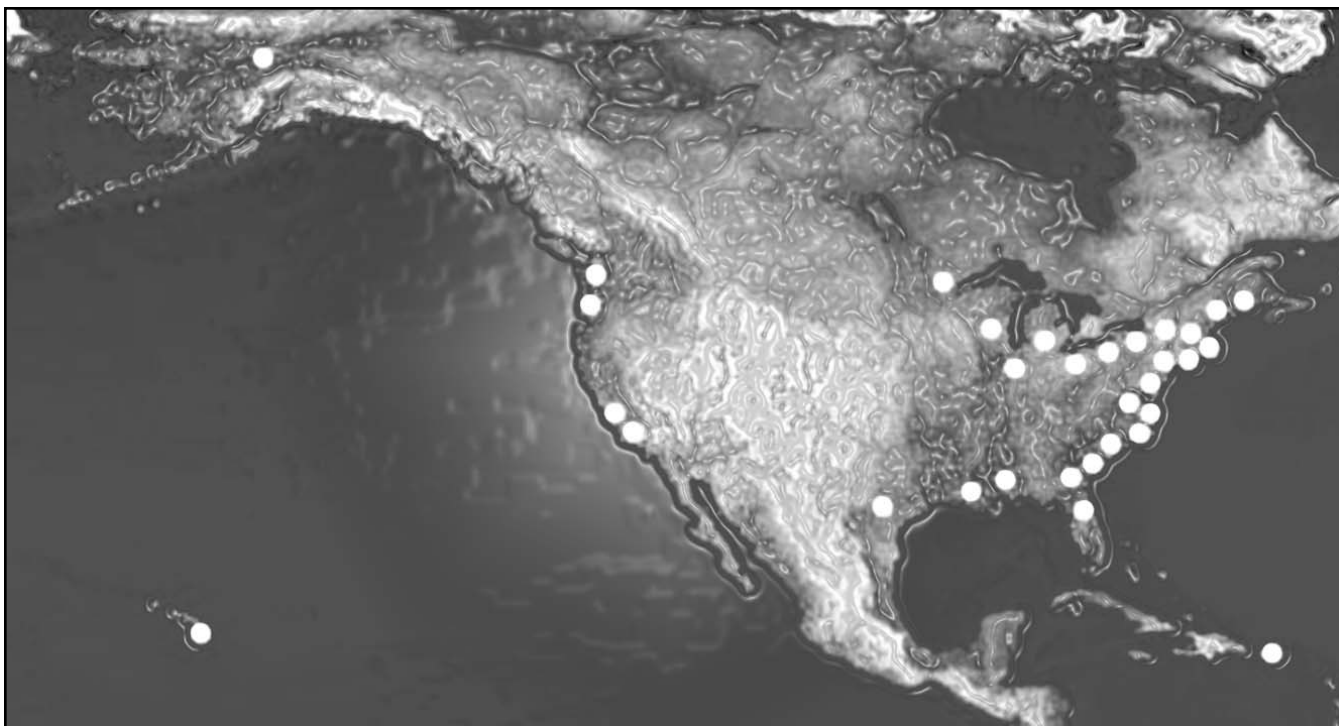
establish and help fund a network of “sea grant” colleges among universities in marine and coastal areas to promote development of their programs in ocean and coastal research. The Sea Grant program forms a network between state research institutions conducting ocean and coastal research and the federal government, in recognition of the importance of those resources to the nation.<sup>2</sup> This article highlights the history of Sea Grant and its continuing importance forty years after it began.

## Background

The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 established the “land grant” university system in which federal lands provided to the states were to be used to fund colleges of agriculture and mechanical arts in the states receiving such land. Examples of land grant colleges include Texas A & M Uni-

*See Sea Grant, page 20*

*Graphic created from map on opening page of the National Sea Grant College Program website:  
<http://www.seagrants.noaa.gov/colleges/colleges.html>*



versity and Michigan State University. The original land grant concept has led to not only the Sea Grant program, but also the Space Grant and Sun Grant programs.

The roots of the Sea Grant program are found in the early 1960s during a period of increased interest in science.<sup>3</sup> America was in the heart of the post-World War II economic boom and there was an increased realization that scientific research could lead to responsible economic development. Specifically, Dr. Athelstan Spilhaus suggested that a Sea Grant program could bring benefits, economic and otherwise, from research in coastal and marine matters, just as the “land grant” college program had done for agricultural and engineering research in the early 1900s. In 1965, the legislation creating the Sea Grant program was introduced by Senator Pell of Rhode Island.

### **Development of the program**

Originally, the responsibility for implementation of the Act was charged to the National Science Foundation, with the intent that it would be administered by the proposed National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).<sup>4</sup> NOAA, formally established in 1970 by placing many related research agencies under one umbrella, includes many important components such as the National Weather Service, National Geodetic Survey, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. The agency is housed within the U.S. Department of Commerce due to the importance of the ocean to the commerce and trade of the United States. In 1970, Sea Grant moved to NOAA due to NOAA's large focus on oceanic research.

In 1971, four universities were the first to achieve Sea Grant College status. They were Oregon State University, University of Rhode Island, Texas A & M University, and University of Washington. Many other institutions were later granted such status throughout the 1970s and onwards. Today, there are thirty university programs that have been designated Sea Grant institution status.

The Act originally focused on funding national strategic investments, through re-

search and programs by sea grant colleges, in fields relating to “ocean and coastal resources.” Amendments in 1976 clarified what requirements applied to determine eligibility for Sea Grant institution status and also established the Sea Grant review panel, which reviewed applications for Sea Grant status designation and for grants and contracts.<sup>5</sup>

Amendments in the 1980s expanded the Act to apply not only to ocean and coastal resources, but to Great Lakes resources as well.<sup>6</sup> This encouraged universities in the Great Lakes area to expand their programs or seek Sea Grant status.<sup>7</sup> The Ohio State University, for example, achieved Sea Grant College status in 1988. Although the primary motivation behind Sea Grant was and continues to be classical marine and ocean or coastal related research, the inclusion of the Great Lakes as part of the research mission is logical. The Great Lakes contain one-fifth of the world's freshwater supplies and are a tremendously important economic engine in the Midwest, for shipping of goods, resource extraction (fishing, e.g.), and tourism. The Great Lakes have rightly been referred to as “inland seas”<sup>8</sup> due to their size, influence on the weather and climate of the region, and other factors that render them more like oceans than traditional lakes. As the Great Lakes drain to the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence Seaway, there likely remains much opportunity for cross-beneficial research in the oceans and Great Lakes.<sup>9</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The objective of Sea Grant continues to be to:

increase the understanding, assessment, development, utilization, and conservation of the Nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources by providing assistance to promote a strong educational base, responsive research and training activities, broad and prompt dissemination of knowledge and techniques, and multidisciplinary approaches to environmental problems.<sup>10</sup>

The continuation of the Sea Grant program is vital, not only for its own importance, but also in conjunction with other federally fostered protection of, and research on, marine and coastal resources and ecosystems. For example, NOAA also administers the National Marine Sanctuaries Program, which currently contains thirteen marine sanctuaries designed to protect selective marine ecosystems in the United States. The most recently established sanctuary protects an area in Lake Huron in the Great Lakes. Such programs form a comprehensive research base, with Sea Grant at its core, promoting the nation's long term interests.☛

### Endnotes

1. 33 U.S.C. §§1121 et seq.
2. 33 U.S.C. §1121(a) (Congressional findings

concerning the importance of the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources).

3. See <http://www.seagrant.noaa.gov/history-ofsg.html>.
4. See [http://www.history.noaa.gov/legacy/-noaahistory\\_3html](http://www.history.noaa.gov/legacy/-noaahistory_3html).
5. See 33 U.S.C. §§1126, 1128.
6. See, e.g., history notes under 33 U.S.C. §§1122, 1123.
7. See [http://history.noaa.gov/legacy/noaahistory\\_9.html](http://history.noaa.gov/legacy/noaahistory_9.html).
8. See Jerry Dennis, *The Living Great Lakes: Searching for the Heart of the Inland Seas*, at 1-3 (2003).
9. See <http://ciler.snre.umich.edu/about>. See <http://www.glsc.usgs.gov>.
10. 33 U.S.C. §1121(b).

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### Claims Extensions, from page 16

claimed that the suits should be filed on an individual basis. The court stated that the legislature authorized the attorney general to bring the suit, thus giving him standing. The court also felt that innumerable individual suits would cause too great a strain on the courts and that the attorney general's suit worked toward judicial efficiency as well.

The insurance companies also claimed Act 803 violated the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, which states the U.S. laws "... shall be the supreme Law of the Land."<sup>3</sup> The defendants claim that Act 803, by changing the claim deadlines of flood insurance policies, interferes with the claims deadlines of the federally-run National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The court said it must interpret legislation in ways that make it effective, rather than meaningless. In doing this, they recognized Act 803 as referring to all flood insurance programs except the federally run NFIP.

The defendants' final argument was that the hurried nature of the court proceeding interfered with their procedural due process by not giving them adequate time to prepare their defense. The court found that they had been given ample time, since they were served

papers notifying them of the declaratory judgment action more than a month before the trial began.

### Conclusion

On August 25, 2006, the Louisiana Supreme Court confirmed the district court's decision that Acts 739 and 803 are constitutional. The court decided even though the new laws were substantive in nature, they should still be applied retroactively since the damage to the insurance companies was minor in contrast to the benefits provided to the Louisianans in need. The decision gave the displaced, storm-ravaged people of Louisiana an extra year to file claims with their private insurance carriers, while also confirming that the extensions do not pertain to the federally run NFIP.☛

### Endnotes

1. *State of Louisiana v. All Property and Casualty Insurance Carriers Authorized and Licensed to do Business in the State of Louisiana*, 937 So. 2d 313, 323 (La. Aug. 25, 2006).
2. *Id.* at 324.
3. *Id.* at 328.